

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the reasons that follow. Applicants respectfully request that the foregoing amendments be entered at least because they are merely clarifying amendments, and do not raise any new issues requiring further search or consideration.

Claim 1 is currently being amended. Support for the amendment to claim 1 can be found at least in FIGs. 2-5, for example. No new matter is being added.

This amendment adds, changes and/or deletes claims in this application. A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the application, irrespective of whether the claim(s) remain under examination in the application, is presented, with an appropriate defined status identifier.

After amending the claims as set forth above, claims 1 and 3-34 are now pending in this application.

Request for Examiner interview

Applicants request an Examiner interview prior to any further Office Action.

Allowable subject matter

Applicants appreciate the indication that claims 5-8 and 10-34 are allowed, and that claims 3 and 4 contain allowable subject matter.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first and second paragraphs

Claims 1, 3 and 4 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. Claims 1, 3 and 4 also stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for the reasons discussed in the Office Action for the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph. Specifically, the Patent Office stated on page 2:

Claim 1 has been amended to recite that the axial direction of the main steam portion is perpendicular to the axial direction of the main steam inlet portion. As illustrated in Figure 1, the main steam inlet (24), however, is parallel (same direction) as the main steam outlet (32). Only the outlet (26) that is perpendicular to the main steam inlet.

Claim 1 has been amended to clarify that “wherein an axial direction of the main steam outlet portion projected on a plane perpendicular to the valve rod of the first valve device is provided so as to be perpendicular to an axial direction of the main steam inlet portion projected on the plane, the axial direction of the main steam outlet portion and the axial direction of the main steam inlet portion being parallel to the plane.” As noted above, support for the amendment to claim 1 can be found at least in FIGs. 2-5. As can be seen in FIG. 2, for example, the axial direction (this direction is vertical in the plane of the page in FIG. 2) of the main steam outlet portion (element 32 in FIG. 2) projected on a plane (the plane of the page in FIG. 2) perpendicular to the valve rod (element 30 in FIG. 2) of the first valve device is provided so as to be perpendicular to an axial direction (this direction is horizontal in the plane of the page in FIG. 2) of the main steam inlet portion (element 24 in FIG. 2) projected on the plane, the axial direction of the main steam outlet portion and the axial direction of the main steam inlet portion being parallel to the plane. FIGs. 3-5 show a similar configuration for the main steam outlet portion and main steam inlet portion. Thus, FIGs. 2-5 provide support for the amendment to claim 1. Accordingly, applicants respectfully request that the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first and second paragraphs be withdrawn.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1 and 9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 7,284,569 to Takemaru et al. (“Takemaru”). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for at least the following reasons.

The rejection based on Takemaru must fail, because Takemaru is not prior art under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e). The present application is a national stage application based on an international application designating the U.S. and filed on October 29, 2003. Thus, the filing date for the present application is the filing date of the international application (See MPEP 1893.03(b)), which is the date of October 29, 2003, *before* the filing date of Takemaru of

October 4, 2004. Thus, Takemaru is not prior art to the present application under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e).

Moreover, Takemaru fails to disclose all of the features of independent claim 1, and thus fails to anticipate that claim.

Independent claim 1 recites:

A steam valve comprising:
a valve casing, including a main steam inlet portion and a main steam outlet portion;
a first valve device disposed at a main steam inlet portion side in the valve casing including a valve seat, a valve body, a valve rod and a driving device;
a second valve device disposed at a main steam outlet portion side in the valve casing including a valve seat, a valve body, a valve rod and a driving device;
a strainer housed in the valve casing, for surrounding the valve body of the first valve device, and
a closing portion provided in the strainer, for blocking a part of the main steam flow flowing from outside to inside,
wherein an axial direction of the main steam outlet portion projected on a plane perpendicular to the valve rod of the first valve device is provided so as to be perpendicular to an axial direction of the main steam inlet portion projected on the plane, the axial direction of the main steam outlet portion and the axial direction of the main steam inlet portion being parallel to the plane, and
wherein the closing portion provided in the strainer is disposed at a position opposite to a side of the main steam outlet portion projected on the plane.

Takemaru fails to disclose at least the above italicized features of claim 1, and in particular fails to disclose or suggest at least the feature of “the closing portion provided in the strainer is disposed at a position opposite to a side of the main steam outlet portion projected on the plane,” in the context of the arrangement of the axial directions of the main steam outlet portion and the main steam inlet portion projected onto the plane perpendicular to the valve rod. The Patent Office equates the main steam inlet 19, main steam outlet 27, and closed area 35, of Takemaru with the main steam inlet portion, main steam outlet portion, and the closing portion, respectively, as recited in claim 1. In contrast to the arrangement of claim 1, however, the closed area 35 of Takemaru is not disposed at a position opposite to a side of the main steam outlet 27. Rather, in Takemaru, the closed area 35 is disposed on the

stream inlet side. Thus, Takemaru fails to disclose all of the features of claim 1, and fails to anticipate that claim.

Dependent claim 9 depends from claim 1, and is patentable for at least the same reasons, as well as for further patentable features recited therein.

Applicants believe that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing or a credit card payment form being unsigned, providing incorrect information resulting in a rejected credit card transaction, or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicants hereby petition for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorize payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

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